REGIONAL RESIDENCE
7225 Lahser Road
BIRMINGHAM, MICH. 48010

SPONSA REGIS

MARCH, 1965

RELIGIOUS VOWS ARE A PUBLIC AND VITAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE SPIRIT AND VOCATION OF THE CHURCH

SPONSA REGIS

A SPIRITUAL REVIEW FOR SISTERS

MARCH 1965 VOLUME 36 NUMBER 7

The Religious and the Church 197
SISTER MARY VIRGINIA, C.S.J.

The Sacramentality of Virginity 205
THOMAS DUBAY, S.M.

Poem 211
JOSEF ZDERAD

Passive Scandal 212
BROTHER WILLIAM MODLIN, C.S.C.

Bulletin Board 218

Book Reviews 221

NIHIL OBSTAT: Reinold Theisen, O.S.B., *Censor deput.* IMPRIMATUR: ✠ Peter W. Bartholome, D.D., *Episc. Sancti Clodoaldi.*

Published monthly by monks of Saint John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minnesota. Rev. Ronald Roloff, O.S.B., Editor; Rev. Myron Kasprick, O.S.B., Managing Editor; Rev. Raymond Roseliep, Poetry Editor. Advisory Board: Rev. Kilian McDonnell, O.S.B., Sister Ritamary Bradley, C.H.M., Sister M. Rose Emmanuella Brennan, S.N.J.M., Sister M. Emmanuel Collins, O.S.F., Mother Mary Robert Falls, O.S.U., Sister M. Jean Frances Fiffe, O.P., Sister M. Jeremy Hall, O.S.B., Sister M. Jerome Keeler, O.S.B., Sister M. Teresa Francis McDade, B.V.M., Sister Mary Virginia Micka, C.S.J., Sister M. Charles Borromeo Muckerhirn, C.S.C., Sister Mary Emil Penet, I.H.M., Sister Mary James Walsh, S.N.D., Sister Annette Walters, C.S.J., Mother Mary Florence Wolff, S.L., Sister M. Francine Zeller, O.S.F.

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The Religious and the Church

SISTER MARY VIRGINIA, C.S.J.

The religious life takes its inspiration from an historical figure—Jesus of Nazareth, whose words and deeds are recorded for us in the evangelical accounts we know as the Gospels—and in the desire of each one of us to express her love for the person Christ by living as he did and for the reasons he did. To understand this relationship is most certainly no small thing; to make it the vital and prevailing motive in our lives is undoubtedly to have achieved sanctity. As Father Gleason emphasizes in *To Live Is Christ*, religious life since the time of the Scribes and Pharisees has faced the grave danger of becoming in practice, if not in theory, merely "following the rules"; but it is in fact nothing if not "the following of Christ in Christ." Unless it is a life rooted in a personal relationship with the God-Man revealed in the Gospels, it is no life at all, for love, not legalism, is its meaning, as it certainly is its source. The three vows, community life, and apostolic commitment have their origins not in canonical code but in the Gospels themselves and in our personal desire to love Christ by sharing with him his evangelical life of divine Sonship. The religious life is a witnessing to this spirit of Christ's divine Sonship; each of its familiar elements—the vows, common life, and community apostolate—expresses an essential virtue of a child of God: "undivided love of the Father, unlimited trust, unconditional submission" and together with these, "a completely fraternal life with a desire to love all men as Jesus loves them, and to give ourselves unceasingly for them," following the example he has set us in the Gospels.[1]

Many other theologians teach this same thing, that the religious life means what the Gospels themselves mean, not a life and a love of rules, but the life and the love of Christ.

But if a proper understanding of the religious life depends so basically on our awareness of its evangelical origins, it is inevitable that in seeking to plumb its depths we be drawn to a closer study

[1] Carpentier, René, S.J. *Life in the City of God*, tr. by John Joyce, S.J. (New York: Benziger Brothers, Inc.), p. 6 and *passim*.

of Sacred Scripture itself. The scholars' careful study of scriptural texts has revealed the true marvel of the marvelous works of God: their vital and far-flung continuity. Binding the Old Testament to the New is YAHWEH, he who eternally IS, always creating, always calling and guiding, always intervening to save, and describing as he works such a sweep through time and space as should bring our boldest moon-man to his knees. That this sacred history —this vibrant action of the finger of God in human affairs—began with creation and has reached its fulfillment, but not yet its completion, in Christ is the great good news of the Gospels, as it is indeed in an infinitely lesser way the good news of Scripture scholarship. Jean Danielou[2] and Albert Gelin[3] have given us magnificent studies which show how recurring Old Testament themes reflect recurring interventions of God, tying time together, as it were, until all divine action is made *now* in Christ.

The concept of "vocation," for instance, is a theme binding together Abraham, Moses, the prophets, and Saint Paul; "faith," is emphasized in the lives of Abraham, Isaias, Job, Saint Paul; "conversion," runs like a thread from Deuteronomy through the whole of the prophetic literature to the *metanoia* of the Gospels; the same is true of *ecclesia* (salvation within the community), traceable from Moses, through Nehemia and the Brotherhood of Israel in the psalms, to Jesus and to Paul; and the "remnant," from the followers of the prophets through the post-exilic idealists and the *anawim,* to the "little flock" of the Gospels.[4] There are many other such themes, all giving glorious evidence of the vital continuity binding fast the story of salvation and teaching that the "mercy of God touching each generation performs a univocal work of redeeming from death and of invigorating with life, so that all successive moments of history follow the same pattern: the wide outer circle of Christian fulfillment is of the same form as the small inner circle of God's promise to Abraham; and all the circles between bear similar shape."[5] Thus Christ's redeeming death un-

[2] Cf. esp. Danielou, Jean. *The Bible and the Liturgy* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1956).

[3] Gelin, Albert. *The Key Concepts of the Old Testament* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961).

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. xiii-xiv.

[5] Ahern, Barnabas M., C.P. *New Horizons* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Fides Publishers, 1963), p. 30.

folds as "the cause and pattern of every previous deed of divine mercy."[6]

A second continuity, that existing between Christ and the Church, is certainly not the discovery of Scripture scholars; students of the liturgy and lovers of the Church have understood this and have pointed it out to us for a long time. It is indeed the very mission of the Church, deriving from her very meaning, to extend Christ himself through the ages in order to give history its fulfillment by resuming everything in him.

But more and more biblical study is directing our attention to a third and basic relationship, that existing between the Church and Sacred Scripture. Under the influence of early 20th century form criticism, which investigated and classified the various influences governing the formation of the Gospels, New Testament scholars have come to recognize the great importance of the primitive Church in forming the Gospel texts. Without suggesting for a moment that the primitive community "created" its own Christ, Catholic biblical scholars declare unmistakably that we do not fully understand the historical Christ, we do not fully confess him, except through the interpretation of the Church. Particularly in the effort to understand the message of the Gospels, we must remember that between the actual words and deeds of the historical Christ and the written record of his life lies the all important, and until recently for Catholic scholars neglected, intermediary level of the Church's understanding of Christ.

This came about because in the providence of God the Gospel was lived and preached for a good thirty years before the Gospels were written; during this time the primitive Christian community, acting as the sole vessel of the message of Jesus, was drawn gradually under the guiding light of the Spirit of Pentecost to a full understanding of the deepest meaning of Jesus' words and the eternal significance of his deeds—in other words, to the inspired interpretation of what Christ was. This "interpretative portrait" of the Church, rather than any scientifically accurate record of historians, was what the evangelists contemplated, each in his own way, as they recorded the story of Christ. In fact, they had no other source; whatever as evangelists they received, they had to

[6] *Ibid.*

receive from the Church, for none except John was an eyewitness of the ministry of Christ. Mark came on the scene only after the resurrection, Luke was a Gentile from Antioch; the canonical Matthew was an anonymous author of the late first century; and even John reveals so profound an interpretation of the meaning and mystery of the historical words and deeds of Christ that he must have been markedly dependent on the full faith of the Church. Thus the Gospels are properly understood as an interpretative portrait prepared by the Church herself under the light of the Holy Spirit, whose influence led her "to see not only what Jesus said and did but, far better, what he really meant."[7]

Father Dulles, speaking as an apologist, draws an even stronger picture of the role of the Church as interpreter of Christ. He says, "The New Testament is not simply a document about Christ. Not even the Gospels are this. They are documents about Christ as the Church sees and reacts to Him."[8] This close relationship between Christ and his disciples is like the strong bond existing in Gospel times between any Israelite religious figure and the community of his followers; thus to accept Jesus without his disciples, in isolation from the circle of his followers, would be "a monstrous thing, quite contrary to what he himself... would have intended," for it was precisely to that chosen group of faithful followers that he sent the Holy Spirit, to flood them with the true understanding of himself and his life. This unqualified emphasis on the essential role played by the Church in delineating Christ for us is the great and genuine sign of true Christian belief. A mere individualist view of Christ is an "optical illusion"; it is a "mirage"; it is not really a view of Christ at all. We must conclude that only when we see that there can be no true portrait of Jesus except that deriving from the collective testimony of his disciples are we entering upon a truly Catholic view of Christianity. It is unmistakably clear that to believe in Jesus "inevitably involves a certain faith in the human witnesses by whom he has chosen to perpetuate his memory on earth. In the last analysis, therefore, the logical alternatives are a faith which goes out to Christ and his Church together, or a thoroughgoing skepticism which refuses

[7] *Ibid.*, Ch. 4, *passim.*

[8] Dulles, Avery, S.J. *Apologetics and the Biblical Christ* (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1963), p. 43.

to accept either."[9] These ideas, we will all agree, are of great importance to the Christian community today, to all who in Baptism are called to put on Christ and thus share in the mission of the whole people of God to rebuild in Christ, to win back for Christ, and to redeem with Christ some small portion of humanity. And this we pray about and try to teach in whatever ways we can to row upon row of bored and squirming young people.

But how much more significant should it be for religious, for that part of the baptized community who have made public profession to bear witness to the evangelical life! How much more attentively should we listen as the Church interprets and applies the spirit of the Gospels to contemporary religious life! How wholeheartedly should we accept her viewpoint of the life of the vows, as extensions of our baptismal dedication to reflect her image as she reflects Christ in human society. This larger thinking, this thinking with the Church, leads us to treasure our vows not merely as signs of a subjective relationship with God, but more as a public and vital involvement in the spirit and vocation of the Church. From this viewpoint the vow of chastity makes of the Sister an image of the Church, the Bride of undivided love called to love all; her vow of obedience makes her an image of the Church's entire submission to Christ as he submitted to his Father, and her vow of poverty, an image of the Church following Christ by seeking first the kingdom of God. Finally in her apostolic commitment, she images the Church taking on herself as did Christ the mission to make known to all mankind the truth that will set them free.[10]

The spirit of our times, both within and outside the Church, adds to the urgency with which we are being called to a greater "Church-consciousness." It is a spirit strongly influenced by an existentialist philosophy which, whatever else it has done, has left in its wake a generation of men and women keenly sensitive to the feel of experience in the here and now. They are intuitive, rather than reflective, and as such, the vast majority of them are keenly alert to realities lying beneath the surface and beyond the façade. Feeling, reality, immediacy: these are the values pur-

[9] *Ibid.* and Ch. 2, *passim.*

[10] Cf. Leger, Paul-Emile, Cardinal. *The Teaching Sister Today* (Ottawa: Publication of the Archdiocese of Montreal, 1963), pp. 11-17. Distributed by Fides, 25 East St. James Street, Montreal.

sued in contemporary thought and life. This is the *zeitgeist* of the world around us, the spirit of both earthly men and spiritual men; no one escapes it.

It is this spirit, more and more, that is penetrating the Church, moving her members everywhere to seek reality and accept no substitute. Long-standing customs and traditions, man-made pedigrees, platitudes and cliches, vested interests and the practices of centuries—all are being brought to trial; nothing is too venerable to escape question. Within the Church as outside it everything is being re-examined and re-assessed: the time-honored presentation of the virtues, the traditional understanding of obedience and virginity, the relation between active and contemplative life, the vocation of the laity—these thought-patterns are all being probed; and in this penetrating search for the real, no pretense, no façade of make-believe, no delusion, however well-intentioned, can survive.[11]

And indeed, who would want it to survive? Or who would want to fall into that opposite falsehood of the zealous by which the baby gets tossed out with the bath? How carefully—and prayerfully—therefore, must we pick our way between the extremes of a deluded complacency and a cynical iconoclasm! If this *zeitgeist* is to contribute positively to the life of the Church—as in the providence of God all history is intended to do—if it is to lead our generation to contemplate not a great abyss of nothingness, but the deepest riches of the Christian life, it must be submitted to the guidance of the Holy Spirit of truth alive in the Church and as desirous as any *zeitgeist*, at least, to renew the face of the earth. Our great need, then, is to open our minds to the Church, the source of truth, in loving and lively obedience, in dependence upon her teaching, in love for her institutions; to take now as our own her concern for the missions, ecumenism, the liturgical revival, the renewal of sacred studies, the re-education of the laity.

But we cannot stop here, for the Church is more to us than a teacher who interprets and directs; she is, very literally, our Mother and the River of Life. And as such she urges us constantly to come to her living stream, to place ourselves consciously and willingly within the great Godward current of all things being drawn onward through time and space, in Christ the Lord of Salva-

[11] Ahern, *op. cit.*, Ch. 11, *passim.*

tion, under the impetus of the Holy Spirit of charity, into the life of glory. This is salvation history—the people of God returning to God in love—and to become part of this history in order to perpetuate it is why we were all created, redeemed, and called to the religious life. And yet how often in recent years we religious have been accused of sitting on the bank, at least psychologically, and watching the river flow on, as if we were quite unaware that in our own salvation history each of us has been called in a special way to live, not apart from the Christian community of love, but as deeply as possible within it.

A moment's thought is enough to make clear this theme of love in community that underlies God's action in our lives as religious and relates them to his action in all of history. He first intervened in our lives, as we will all agree, when he created us. By calling us into human life he established us in a creature-to-Creator relationship with him, endowing us with a personality which he alone fully knows and a meaning which he alone understands. He intervened again when he called us to Baptism, establishing us then in a child-to-Father relationship with himself and bestowing upon us all the advantages of children, chief of which is the gift of his very life. He will call us again at the end of time, into eternity, where the relationship he has prepared for us is so deep, so total, so rich in eternal life that we can only begin to understand it by applying the analogy used in Scripture, that of the union of bride and bridegroom at the everlasting wedding banquet.

As we consider these acts of God in our lives, we can see that with each of them he invites us to greater love—from creature to daughter to bride. Our religious vocation, coming somewhere between the call to Baptism and the call to eternal bridal union with God, is, as was pointed out at the beginning, nothing if not part of this love pattern; it has always been understood by the Church as relating us to God in a way that resembles more closely than any other on earth the bride-bridegroom relationship of eternity. It is, furthermore, a love given and responded to in community, thus continuing the pattern of community already established in our lives by God when he called us successively into the human family and into the Church, temporal and eternal, and

making utterly illogical any attempt to live as religious except in the context of human society and of the Church. On the other hand, when we see the religious life as aiming in 1965 to respond as the people of God whose father is Abraham, to God's love this day poured out upon us, we can see the specific elements of the religious life—the vows, common life, community apostolate—in their proper perspective, not as ends in themselves, but as means serving the great end, charity; for as charity is facilitated by the three evangelical counsels, so the counsels are made sure by the vows. The vows are made stable in a new state of life, and it is this new state of life that makes possible a community apostolate of love, either spiritual or corporal.

Thus we discover that though we may use in turn the language of canon law, the language of theology, moral and dogmatic, the language of Scripture, apologetics, and liturgy, or the unspoken language of the soul in prayer, we are really repeating one great idea—the all-encompassing reality giving meaning and life to all men in all times: that God has called us all to answer his love together in a cosmic AMEN.

The Sacramentality of Virginity

THOMAS DUBAY, S.M.

The universe is a gigantic sign. From the fantastically minute and mysterious subatomic world to the awe-inspiring galactic swirls almost frivolously tossed through the vast reaches of space, the cosmos is a splendid declaration of the divine. If one grants that in a broad sense of the term a sacrament is a mysterious union of the visible and the invisible with the former pointing out the latter, he will grant likewise that all creation may be described as sacramental, for it is indeed true that "the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims his handiwork" (Ps. 18:2).

Yet, awesome though it be, all this is a merely natural hymn to the beauty of Beauty. On the higher level of the supernatural, contemporary theology is vibrating with the sacramental approach to Christ, to his Church and, of course, to the seven grace-producing signs. The incarnate Word is presented as *the* sign of God, since of all visible realities he is the most sacred, the most perfect declaration of the Father. When one looks on him he even sees the Father (Jn. 14:9). He is also the most efficacious of all signs, for as the Church sings to the Father, "through the mystery of the Incarnate Word a new light of your brilliance has shown upon the eyes of our mind, so that as we visibly know this God we may be snatched up by him to a love of invisible things" (Preface for Christmas).

The Church is also now presented as the sacrament of Christ, his extension into space and time, his very mystical Body, a declaration to the world of the eternal Son. It can come, then, as no surprise if with Catholic tradition we see a sacramentality in the virgin, in her whose glory it is, according to Pius XII, to be a living image of the union of Christ and his Church, a sign of this Church's holiness and motherhood.

If the virgin is a sign of the Church, and if in this age of ecumenism the Church's visibility and sanctity must be made

apparent, we cannot escape the conclusion that consecrated virginity as a sign merits deeper study.

THE TEACHING CHURCH

What can we say about the sign-character of virginity that will be well founded in revelation and the sense of the Church? Surely there is nothing in Sacred Scripture that suggests that the virginal consecration is a sacrament as baptism or marriage are sacraments. Nor is there any clear statement that calls the dedicated woman a sign to the world. Are we not, therefore, indulging in pious reveries in talking about the sacramentality of virginity?

We think not. And we think not because the teaching Church thinks not. Pope Pius XII quite clearly referred to a sacramentality in virginity when he called virgins "living images" of the integrity of the union of the Church with Christ and a "marvelous sign" both of the Church's sanctity and her motherly fruitfulness. The pontiff quoted Cyprian to the effect that these pure women are an "image of God" reflecting the holiness of the Lord.[1] One could hardly refer more clearly to a sign-value in virginity. Following the light of the Church's mind we can pursue an ascending approach and find traces of this same thought in patristic writings and even in the New Testament.

In the West we have already noted Cyprian remarking in the third century that the Church's virgins are an *image* of God, somehow, therefore, showing in their persons his holiness—visible signs of an invisible reality. Ambrose, too, in the following century saw some sort of sign-character in dedicated purity. Marcellina heard the words on receiving the veil of her virginal consecration: "May (your Spouse) bestow on you also the pure sacrament of virginity."[2] It is not perfectly clear what Ambrose meant by *sacramentum.* He did not mean the term in the sense of one of our seven grace-producing signs, but he probably did wish to suggest the sign-character of the virginal veil and/or the very virginity itself. In either case he apparently wished to indicate that Marcellina in her virginal dress was a mysterious image to the world of the Christian life and its God-centeredness.

[1] *Sacra Virginitas, A.A.S.* (1954), 46:173-174.
[2] *De virginibus,* Bk. 3, c. 1; P.L. 16:219-220.

In the East Saint Gregory of Nyssa likewise saw a sacramental element in virginity. For him the virgin of Christ was already in this passing world a concrete picture of the final destiny of men. "The virginal life seems to be a certain *image* of that future immortality."[3] Dedicated virginity is more than words about eternity. It is a drastic act, and even more, a drastic way of *being* that graphically shouts to mankind that earthly pleasures, material wealth, worldly prestige are all ephemeral and soon to be swallowed up into the supreme life of eternity. The virgin is a concrete sign in her chaste person of Paul's parousial advice to all men: "This I say, brethren, the time is short; it remains that those who have wives be as if they had none; and those who weep, as though not weeping; and those who rejoice, as though not rejoicing; and those who buy, as though not possessing; and those who use this world, as though not using it, for this world as we see it is passing away. I would have you free from care. He who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord..." (I Cor. 7:29-32). The virgin is a sacrament of man's ultimate immortality. She is like an angel of God (Matt. 22:30).

Our last remark may serve to remind us that the sacred pages contain several hints of the sacramentality of dedicated chastity. To be sure, there is nothing as clear as our patristic and papal statements, but, as is often the case, what we cannot find explicit in the biblical deposit we find implicit.

Saint Paul in assigning contemplation as the reason for consecrated chastity clearly states that the result of virginal contemplation is a holiness in body and in soul. "The unmarried woman, and the virgin, thinks about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy in body and in spirit" (I Cor. 7:34). Now, holiness in body, we feel, can include several elements. There is first of all the wholeness of physical integrity, the intactness of a body reserved to God alone. Even her pure body declares that God is the virgin's sole love. There is, secondly, a holiness in body implied in a freedom from disturbances of the flesh, the corporeal calm usually found in the perfectly chaste person.[4] The indefinable beauty written on the face of a pure religious charms even the

[3] *De virginitate*, c. 13; P.G. 25:290.

[4] The virgin is spared the "tribulation of the flesh" of which Saint Paul speaks in 1 Cor. 7:28.

grossest persons. It is manifestly a sign. Finally, the holiness of the virginal body implicitly includes its prefiguring the ultimate holiness of the risen bodies of all the blessed. Of these risen bodies we learn from Paul that "what is sown in corruption rises in incorruption; what is sown in dishonor rises in glory; what is sown in weakness rises in power; what is sown a natural body rises a spiritual body" (I Cor. 15:42-44). Virginity is a sign of these splendors for it is angelic: "At the resurrection, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage, but will be as angels of God in heaven" (Matt. 22:30).

According to Sacred Scripture the virgin enjoys a special relationship, a peculiar closeness to Christ. It is a familiarity that will be particularly apparent after the final resurrection. "These follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These were purchased from among men, first-fruits unto God and unto the Lamb, and in their mouth there was found no lie; they are without blemish" (Apoc. 14:4-5). If this heavenly familiarity is a result of an earthly and consecrated integrity, we are not doing violence to the text in seeing this integrity of time as a sign of a relationship of eternity.

CONTEMPORARY NEED FOR VIRGIN-SIGN

When a Catholic—be he bishop, priest, layman or religious—talks about the need for more vocations to our Sisterhoods, he is invariably thinking about hospitals to be cared for and schools to be staffed. He is thinking of the crying need for Sisters in catechetical work, in social work, in the home and foreign missions. He is hardly ever thinking of the need of signs placed on a mountain.

Yet our world needs persons who in their very flesh are witnesses to the transcendence of God, to his primacy in creation. *The world needs people who are lights to the world in their very persons.* The world needs pure persons, not just words about purity. Society needs total lovers of God, not merely sermons about loving God. Mankind needs persons who live for eternal life, not only instructions about eternal life. Because the virgin as virgin is a witness to the divine primacy, to purity, to love, to eternity, the world needs *her*—not only her work.

But the world has no suspicion that it needs her. It is more or less aware that it needs her teaching and nursing and praying,

but it is very far indeed from thinking that it has much, if anything, to learn from her virginity. The sacramentality of the virgin is lost on the vast multitudes of men because our public relations program is weak.

VIRGIN-SIGN MUST BE UNDERSTOOD

No sign is valuable as a sign unless it signifies. The most artistically executed symbolism or letter combination is worthless as a sign if it is meaningless to the observer. A flag which no one recognizes as a flag may be worth something as a decoration or a dusting cloth, but it is useless as a symbol of a country. Virginity has a lofty value for the virgin, but for those who understand neither its genuine character nor its purposes it has little point as a sign.

Now it is surely an anomaly that here in the United States (and much the same could be said, we suspect, of many other sections of the world) the religious life among women is flourishing, and yet few Americans—very few Americans either within or without the Church—possess any clear concept of its sign value. Consecrated virginity is flourishing in our land not only numerically (we have more Sisters today than ever before), but it is flourishing likewise in the sanctity of the religious themselves (our Sisters are still the choicest portion of the Lord's flock) and the fruitfulness of their spiritual motherhood. Yet for most Catholics and non-Catholics alike the nun is mostly an enigma. She is admired by many, of course, but chiefly because she *does* so much good. What she *is* is not appreciated. Her perfect chastity is almost pitied in many quarters. Wide sectors of the modern world contemn physical virginity, the only kind they know. That Sister A, so talented and so lovely a person, should leave the world and decline a natural motherhood is viewed almost as a crime against herself...and perhaps against society as well. We feel that in most cases even practicing Catholics have at best only a dim grasp of the value of dedicated chastity in itself, that is, as related to the attainment of God and our ultimate fulfillment in the beatific vision. We feel, too, that they do not understand how a woman can be fulfilled as a woman in the virginal life.

If this picture is not overdrawn, at whose threshold is the blame to be laid? Are the laity to be blamed? Yes, to some extent,

for a subtle naturalism lies at the root of much misunderstanding. Fervent souls seem almost automatically to understand consecrated chastity. Are priests at fault? Yes, partially. We have not gone to the theological roots in explaining virginity, if indeed we have even tried to explain it at all. Are religious women to be blamed? Yes, to a considerable extent, for their public relations programs have been, from the informational point of view, superficial and unimpressive. The vast instructive potential of our thousands of Sister teachers and nurses has lain fallow in this area. Vocation talks and programs have been presented on the "sales pitch" level. We suspect that they rather badly fail to impress our sophisticated and advertising-hardened youth. We feel that religious women do not for the most part present in their classrooms a challenging, theologically deep picture of their consecration. And what else will impress our modern sales-resistant young women, future mothers of our future candidates?

If consecrated virginity is to be an effective sign, we must teach it. The Sister can be an effective sacrament in her person only when men and women understand her meaning in the deep recesses of her dedication. A superficial attractiveness is insufficient. Mankind must be made to see her profound and real significance in the supernatural economy. This significance must be taught in season and out of season. Itching ears must hear sound doctrine; they must be turned from fables to the truth. We may in this matter apply to priest and religious the solemn admonition of Paul to Timothy, for are not more vocations a crucial need in the Church today?

> I charge thee, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead by his coming and by his kingdom, preach the word, be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, entreat, rebuke with all patience and teaching. For there will come a time when they will not endure sound doctrine; but having itching ears, will heap up to themselves teachers according to their own lusts, and they will turn away their hearing from the truth (2 Tim. 4:1-4).

We propose, therefore, in following articles to trace out some of the more important implications of the sacramentality of virginity. We shall attempt to show what we feel is the immense

significance of the virginal consecration for a world that is old, tired, dull, and more or less disillusioned. We feel that the freshness and charm of a holy virginity preserved for Christ is itself a picture of the always new, intriguing, supremely delightful final victory, for the virgin silently shouts in her own person "that eye has not seen or ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, what things God has prepared for those who love him" (I Cor. 2:9).

TO AN UNKNOWN SOLDIER
IN MEMORIAM 1944 - 1964

For me, though twenty years have died,
It's always this morning I met
Your handsome face of child-smooth cheeks
And eyes maid blue (by order:
Wrath alloyed).
Did you see my trembling?
Did you see, before we spent
Our bullets dutifully, each upon
The other, and mine bought
Your breath?
Still now you sleep; and I long
For the swift night and a place
Beside you, deaf to this constant tap
Of weeping.

JOSEF ZDERAD

Passive Scandal

BROTHER WILLIAM MODLIN, C.S.C.

To the modern reader the word scandal may conjure up images of apostate priests, notorious divorce cases, or sensationalism in some form, incomplete without a spectacular or at least a certain dramatic element. Scandal is popularly defined as a reaction of shame, disgrace, or outrage at an offence against our moral feelings. Etymologically, the word *scandal* simply denotes a snare or a stumbling, as does its Latin root *scandalum;* and, contrary to the modern notion, seductive inflections and passionate overtones do not constitute requisite elements for the existence of scandal. That these somewhat theatrical connotations have been more or less accepted is perhaps indicated by our mild surprise when we learn that one may be scandalized because of something not in itself sinful, but which has the appearance of evil.[1] That Saint Thomas follows the etymological sense of *scandalum* is evident from his description: "When a body, while moving along a path, meets with an obstacle, it may happen to stumble against it and be disposed to fall down: such an obstacle is a scandal."[2]

As the vice opposed to charity and directly opposed to fraternal correction,[3] scandal may be active or passive. *Active* scandal is an act (or omission) which is either evil or has the appearance of evil. Active scandal is *direct* when the scandalizer intends the sin of another; it is *indirect* when the scandalizer is not aware that he has occasioned scandal. *Passive* scandal exists in the person scandalized; it is occasioned by the action of another, and it is always at least a venial sin.[4] Both active and passive scandal are always sinful to some degree, yet passive scandal can exist without active scandal (as when a person is scandalized because of another's good deed).

[1] Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (New York: Benziger, 1947), II-II 43, 1, ad 2.
[2] Ibid., II-II 43, 1.
[3] Ibid., II-II 43, 3.
[4] Ibid., II-II 43, 2, ad 3.

While extreme cases of scandal may be infrequent in religious life, that genuine scandal might exist among religious is by no means a remote possibility. For example, the devitalizing effect of watching petty community politics over a period of years may induce a lessening of spiritual resilience and lead to a very definite "stumbling." Quite apart from the cumulative effect of observing the faulty conduct of others, the individual religious may be influenced by formalism, legalism, or an unrealistic evaluation of man's nature, capacity, and limitations. Such a religious can only increase the hazard of scandal within religious life. Our brief discussion directly concerns those things which may either dispose or actually create a particular proclivity to passive scandal: legalism, a defective notion of man's inherent capabilities, or the deficient practice of the antithesis of scandal, mercy.

Psychologically, scandal does not "creep up" on us; we dispose ourselves to fall. The cause of our "stumbling" (*scandalum*) is not primarily another's example or misconduct, for scandal can be taken from even a perfectly innocent deed. Clearly, scandal is not coercion; and we retain personal responsibility no matter what others may say or do. Thus, the entire weight of scandal does not rest on the person who gives scandal, but the person scandalized incurs guilt in proportion as he is disturbed by a movement of sin (including venial sin) occasioned by an inordinate word or deed.[5] Saint Thomas, writing of passive scandal, states: "Passive scandal is always due to some active scandal; yet this active scandal is not always in another, but in the very person who is scandalized, because, to wit, he scandalizes himself."[6]

One mentality which has a particular proclivity to scandal is that of legalism and formalism. A legalist mentality construes the observance of rules and obligations as holiness made concrete. The defects of others, interpreted as contradicting notions of propriety or justice, or seen merely as ugly blemishes disfiguring an ideal, evoke only righteous indignation.

The maxim: *"Summum jus, summa injuria"* — Justice supreme may be supreme injustice — applies here specifically to our evaluation of the conduct of others. In spite of the fact that from the

[5] Ibid., II-II 43, 4.
[6] Ibid., II-II 43, 6, ad 1.

book of Genesis to the writings of modern depth psychologists the lost integrity and innate weakness of man is amply illustrated, we never stop trying to observe a consistency of behavior which human nature is incapable of giving. Without the perfecting and vitalizing element of charity, our justice remains largely sterile and cold. We see in the failings of others not opportunities for compassion and sympathy, but reasons for complacency... or scandal at a compromised ideal.

We know from the Epistle to the Romans (13:10) that "Love is the fulfillment of the Law." We know too, that scandal is opposed to charity; the two are mutually exclusive.[7] It is easy to see, then, that the "legalist" religious who becomes scandalized while claiming to love the law must have a deficient notion of either charity or legal justice; for to crucify Christ anew by the evil of scandal, and to justify the scandal by reason of concern for the law, is to re-echo the monstrous demand uttered before the balcony of Pilate: "We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he made himself the Son of God." In this ultimate triumph of perverted legalism, the Law, given by God directly as the sign of special predilection, had become the very reason why his own Son was being crucified!

Legalist religious, emmeshed in human judgments and prone to rashness and scandal, might well see their defects as inconsonant with Christian ideals. Any concern for justice will inevitably lead to injustice if the perfecting element of charity is omitted. Legalist tendencies will reach the fruition of their potential perfection only when informed by the specific virtue of charity. "Now if you are led by the spirit, you are not under the Law," that is, under the bondage of mere legalism (Gal. 5:18). Saint Paul's epistle to the Galatians states: "Brethren, even if a person is caught doing something wrong, you who are spiritual should instruct such a one in a spirit of meekness, considering yourself, lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:1). Now as the vice diametrically opposed to such fraternal correction, scandal flatly contradicts the Joannine concept: "Love is the fulfillment of the Law." It is in tribute to charity rather than to legalism that the religious prays in the Divine Office:

[7] Ibid., II-II 43, 2.

"Much peace have they that love the Law, and to them there is no stumbling block" (Psalm 165).

In most of the "classic" cases of scandal in the New Testament the legalist element is involved. Legality was without its perfecting element; the norms of merciful love had yet to be exemplified by Christ. It is interesting to note that the criterion of mercy rather than strict justice was introduced twice by Christ on occasions directly and specifically involving scandal. In Matthew 12:7, after the scandalized Pharisees blame Jesus and the apostles for rubbing ears of corn in their hands on the Sabbath, our Lord said: "If you knew what this meant: I will have mercy and not sacrifice, you would never have condemned the innocent." And earlier, immediately after Christ invited Matthew to "follow me," Jesus was asked (again as the result of scandal) why he ate with publicans and sinners. His answer was: "Go and learn what this means: I desire mercy and not sacrifice" (Matt. 9:13).

Of particular pertinence here is the conclusion of Saint Thomas Aquinas. He tells us that, "while charity is the greatest of all virtues considered in itself, *mercy* is the greatest of all the virtues which relate to our neighbor, and it pertains to mercy to overcome the defects we observe in others."[8] Although our practice of mercy is always an imperfect imitation of a specifically divine attribute, it remains a condition for receiving mercy ourselves. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Matt. 5:7).

In David's words: "God looks down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there be one who is wise and seeks God. All alike have gone astray: they have become perverse; there is not one who does good, not even one..." (Psalm 52). And our attitude? We speak of a particular religious house with studied patience, explaining that conditions there are "not ideal" since the observance of the constitutions vascillates in some particulars. Annoyed and distressed, we rationalize that scandals "must come," though we are quite taken aback that they are foisted upon sincere and observant religious. God himself finds that "all alike have gone astray," but we demand from our neighbor endless edification in the path of perfection. Of course, our confreres primarily fail not us but God by their weaknesses; and we, so often straying

[8] Ibid., II-II 30, 4.

toward goals having little or no reference to God, perhaps very appropriately tread back to him under conditions which are "not ideal."

It is good to consider that many religious have lived out their lives under conditions which could well have been "stumbling blocks." Writing of Mother Marie de Gonzague, Prioress of Carmel during the lifetime of Saint Therese, Father Rohrback states: "She allowed the nuns to receive communion—something which lay within the discretion of the superior at that time—according to the amount of personal attachment they had for her; once she even allowed communion as a reward to a nun who had trapped a rat for her pet cat."[9] We know that Therese handled this difficult personality with tact and discretion, without finding her bizarre conduct an occasion for gossip, detraction, or backbiting. Though Therese's secret lies in her very "charitably merciful" mentality, she herself states: "We must rise above what the Sisters say, what they do... we must live in our Monastery as though we were to spend only two days there."[10] It is worth noting that Therese did not "rise above the Sisters" as one ethically superior or smugly self-justified; and the letter written by Therese to Mother de Gonzague (after the elections of 1896) illustrates not condescension, but love. In it Therese alludes to her Prioress as the gentle shepherdess, comforts her, and directs her to a higher goal, thereby reflecting beautifully "...but go and learn what this means: I desire mercy and not sacrifice."

Psalm 165 reads: "Much peace have they that love the Law, and to them there is no stumbling block (*scandalum*)." Abiding in Christ, adopting "this mind... which was also in Christ Jesus," we will surmount the stumbling blocks which we have made for ourselves, seeing in the defects of others no excuse for impatience, tale-bearing, egoistic rationalizations, but rather recognizing our own myopic vision trying desperately to observe and find in others a consistency which human nature is incapable of giving. If the occasion to take scandal will always be there, so will the occasion to rise above it; or more correctly, to rise above our own innate

[9] Peter Thomas Rohrback, O.C.D., *The Search For Saint Therese* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1961), p. 144.

[10] Summarium of the Process as quoted in Victor de la Vierge, *Spiritual Realism of Saint Therese of Lisieux* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1961), p. 75.

weakness, since scandal implies that the mind of the person who takes scandal is unsetteled in its adherence to good.[11] Our best defence against scandal will not be to hide from every possible source of disedification, but to become more settled in virtue, more stable in the love of God. Our security lies neither in "ideal conditions" nor in companions who never fail or falter, but in God. As Psalm 90 states:

"Because he clings to me, I will deliver him;
I will set him on high because he acknowledges my name.
He shall call upon me, and I will answer him;
I will be with him in distress;
I will deliver him and glorify him;
with length of days I will gratify him
and will show him my salvation."

Secure and stable in God's merciful love, and developing within ourselves a Christlike "charitably merciful" attitude, we will never be shaken by scandal. Should the inscrutable providence of God place us in scandalous circumstances we will "hold steadfast," accepting Saint Paul's appeal to "Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:21). Keenly aware that "in many things we all offend" (James 3:2), we may appropriately pray with our fault-ridden confreres: "If Thou didst keep count of offenses O Lord, O Lord who would endure it?" (Psalm 129:3). As one who recognizes himself to be "a vessel also of wood and clay" (II Tim. 2:20), our habitual purpose when confronting the faults of others will be to "Put on therefore... a heart of mercy" (Col. 3:12), conformable to Christ's gently impelling directive: "Abide in my Love" (John 15:9).

[11] *Summa* II-II 43, 5.

Bulletin Board

From time to time we receive news items or notices of events that seem to be of interest to Sisters generally. In some cases we have published formal notices in our advertizing section; other items have been ignored entirely because there was no medium which could give them expression in our pages. We are therefore going to experiment with a Bulletin Board, which will be open for any news or announcements that are of general interest. The items that follow will indicate what we have in mind. We will not publish announcements about conferences or activities which occur within one Congregation or province alone. (There is a limit to the amount of space we can give to this!) However, if the news concerns all religious, or if your workshop is open to Sisters of all kinds, we will be glad to bring it to the attention of our readers. The Bulletin Board will appear as often as we have pertinent material.

The first announcement concerns the magazine itself. We are now in our 36th year of publication under the title, *Sponsa Regis*. Reactions to this title have been predominantly favorable, and previous suggestions that it be changed have not produced very much enthusiasm. However, it seems to us that a Latin title, however good it may have been in the past, is no longer appropriate at a time when the whole Church is striving to identify itself as a vital force in the contemporary world. Whatever may be one's personal attitude, this is the age of the vernacular; and if we cling too tenaciously to the idiom of a former day we implicitly proclaim our willingness to be excluded from the developments that are taking place all around us. Admitting that not all of these developments may be good or fruitful, it seems to us that a magazine which claims to be pertinent for all religious women should not ignore the *aggiornamento*, lest it be thought that the spiritual lives of Sisters are still being lived in an archaic past.

We therefore propose to adopt an English title beginning with the first number of Volume 37, which will appear in September, 1965. To assist us in selecting a name that will be in harmony with the contents and purpose of the magazine, we invite you to submit titles of your choice. Brevity is desirable by all means, and the title must be in English. We will accept suggestions that are postmarked up to and including June 1, 1965, and will award a prize of $25 for the title which is finally adopted. (We would really like to offer a larger prize, but are afraid that we might be so buried with suggestions that we could never reach a decision!) You do not need to be a subscriber. If two or more suggest the prize-winning name, the earliest postmark will have to decide the winner.

Here are some considerations: we are an exclusively spiritual review; we are concerned exclusively with Sisters; most of our readers are engaged in active apostolic work of some kind; they are becoming more conscious of themselves as parts of the whole Church; the many contemporary developments in the Church are causing both Sisters and others to re-evaluate the role of the Sister in the modern world; this re-evaluation has profound implications for the spiritual life of the individual Sister. If you can reduce some or all of these ideas to one or two or three words, you will deserve a reward! Please address The Editor, *Sponsa Regis*, St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minnesota, 56321.

Our authors. Sister Mary Virginia, C.S.J., teaches at the College of Saint Catherine in Saint Paul, Minnesota. "The Religious and the Church" is a talk delivered at a meeting of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Carondelet. — We are happy to welcome *Father Thomas Dubay, S.M.*, to our pages once more. Father Dubay teaches in Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans, and has recently published a book for young religious entitled, *Dawn of a Consecration* (Boston, Daughters of Saint Paul, 1964). — A member of Father Roseliep's poetry workshop at Georgetown University in the summer of 1964, *Josef Zderad* is beginning to publish his first poems; he has a novel just completed. His home is in Westchester, Illinois. — *Brother William Modlin, C.S.C.*, is on the staff of Stonehill College, North Easton, Massachusetts, and is also welcomed after a previous article.

We are happy to announce that Father Durand's series of articles, which appeared in the past seven issues under the general title, "Learning How to Love," will be reprinted in pamphlet form. The 64-page booklet will be entitled, "Friendship in Religious Life," and will be available early in March from the Liturgical Press at 35c a copy. Please address: The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 56321.

The Food Research Center for Catholic Institutions, North Easton, Massachusetts, will offer three workshops during the summer of 1965 for Sisters, Brothers, and laymen engaged in food preparation and food management. Brother Herman E. Zaccarelli, C.S.C., Director of the Institute, has announced that the workshops will be held at Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, June 9 to June 20; at Stonehill College, North Easton, Massachusetts, July 5 to July 16; and at Saint Michael's College of the University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada, August 1 to August 12.

The program will give religious an opportunity to acquire knowledge of the latest developments in the highly specialized areas of food preparation, management, and purchasing. The workshops also provide the participants with a unique opportunity for the exchange of ideas. Each workshop will cover such subjects as economical and tasteful preparation of all types of food, menu planning, reduction of food waste, food purchasing for religious institutions, institutional nutrition, sanitation, and the science and art of baking.

A feature of each workshop will be the inclusion of a theological program especially designed to meet the needs of religious engaged in food service. This phase of the program will be under the direction of Father William F. Hogan, C.S.C., J.C.D., Director of the Superiors' Institute and chairman of the theology department of Stonehill College. Father Hogan's article in our last issue, "Coadjutors in the Life of the Church" (*Sponsa Regis*, February, 1965, pp. 181-187), indicated the direction of his thought in this important area.

Through the cooperation of manufacturers in the food service field, a limited number of scholarships have been made available for personnel interested in attending the workshop. Further in-

formation about any aspect of the program may be obtained from Brother Herman Zaccarelli, C.S.C., Stonehill College, North Easton, Massachusetts.

Those who have occasion to go to Europe this summer may be interested in joining the 4th annual group flight sponsored by the Conference-a-Month Club of Englewood, New Jersey. Departure will be by commercial jet from Kennedy International Airport, New York, on June 17. After landing in Europe, individuals or groups are free to travel as they wish. The return trip is scheduled for August 19.

By joining the group for the round-trip flight, a substantial saving can be achieved. All arrangements are being handled by the Catholic Travel Bureau, 1841 Broadway, New York, N.Y., and Mrs. Ruth Reid is the person to be contacted at that address.

Book Reviews

HOMEMADE CHRISTIANS. By Mary Reed Newland. Witness Book I. Geo. A. Pflaum, Dayton, Ohio, 1964. Pp. 128. Paperback, 50c.

A unique but pertinent title for a book devoted to forming the family into Christians within the home. Designed primarily for use in Confraternity of Christian Doctrine discussion clubs, *Homemade Christians* can serve as discussion material for one meeting in the eight-meeting season or for two meetings in the 16-meeting season. Yet there are other possibilities for the use of this book: it could be useful to individual parents wishing to explore a gamut of ways for establishing a thoroughly Catholic family; it could be serviceable for teachers and students in high school and college home-making courses.

The eight chapters in this book come under three main headings. The first, Christian home living, develops the theme that parents are teachers in the family gathered as a miniature Mystical Body. The next part, Scripture in the home, explains the reading and explanation of the Bible in the home. Part three details how to live the liturgy in the home throughout the Church year. Specific examples of ways in which this can be done are given. At the end of each section, there is a paragraph entitled "My Apostolate" which sums up a resolution

for carrying out the ideas contained in the chapter.

Homemade Christians seeks to teach parents how to carry out the wish of Pope John XXIII: "We would like every family to become a center of spirituality and a school of virtue."

Sister Mary Xavier, O.S.U.
Louisville, Kentucky

THE LIVING RELIGION. By Jean Vieujean. Translated by David Heimann. Newman Press, Westminster, Md., 1964. Pp. xii, 261. Cloth, $4.50. Here is a treatise on the spiritual life with a strongly intellectual slant. It was designed to aid the reader at the crossroads faced by "the crisis of religion so common among young, educated adults." The author examines every phase of the true religion: its essence, expression, moral implications, notion of the supernatural, the act of faith, etc. He performs this task well and attractively. He is at his best on the topic of sincerity (Chapter I) and on the "disfiguration of religion" (Chapter IV). Particularly recommended are the sections on moralism, dogmatism, and utilitarianism on pages 158-169. Many passages will strike the reader as potent points for meditation, such as the treatise on the "moment of decision" on pages 215-219. However, this book is not designed merely for spiritual reading; parts of it will have to be postponed for leisurely study—as the fifteen pages of footnotes at the end would suggest.

Martin Hopkins, O.P.
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A HISTORY OF ISRAEL. By Leonard Johnston. Sheed and Ward, New York, 1964. Pp. 181. Cloth, $3.95. Fr. Johnston, a well-known British Scripture scholar, has written one of the simplest, yet most accurate presentations of Old Testament history available to adults. The text of the book reveals an author thoroughly in control of biblical background. Fr. Leonard deftly weaves into the fabric of his story the threads of Egyptian and Babylonian culture, the colors of Palestinian landscape. The Israelites appear right at home in the Ancient Near East.

There is no great show of learning; scientific terminology is kept at an absolute minimum. The reader, at the same time, is aware of the genuine, fully human context of the biblical story. God is seen to be present, redeeming and blessing his people, not despite of, but because of and within their daily environment. This small book to an amazing degree covers quite adequately the major periods of Israelite history. The prophetic movement seems to be the only important area of the Bible shortchanged.

The reader, for whom Fr. Leonard writes, is an adult, interested yet inadequately trained in the Bible. The author's sensitiveness to his needs, unfortunately, did not carry through in providing good visual aids. Two maps, one of Palestine and another of the Near East, are very disappointing; and a chronological table, extending from 2000 B.C. to Herod the Great, takes up less space than three short pages. Both of these aids seem to have been prepared too hastily. Elam is

a few hundred miles out of place on the map, while the chart places Isaiah side by side with the battle of Qarqar (853 B.C.). Very few of the prophets, in fact, are listed in the table of events.

In looking forward to a second edition of this book, I hope not only for improvement in pedagogical helps but also for more references to the Bible. The reader would be benefited if each section of the text ended with a listing of biblical passages for further reading.

Fr. Leonard's *History of Israel* is a short, clear introduction to the Old Testament, and in this capacity performs a good service to Sisters who want to orientate themselves quickly on the biblical story.

Carroll Stuhlmueller, C.P.
Passionist Fathers Seminary
Louisville, Kentucky

YAHWEH: THE GOD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. By Robert W. Gleason, S.J. Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1964. Pp. iv, 124. Cloth, $3.95.

Old Testament studies of our time continue to disclose new depths to the mystery of Yahweh, God revealing himself in history to the patriarchs and prophets. They emphasize the never-to-be-forgotten truth that Israel's God—and ours—is a living God, who changes lives wherever he acts, who cannot be captured conceptually once and for all. When one begins to write for others about this dynamic personality—most especially because that Person is the living God—one is hard put to communicate satisfactorily "what He is really like." Father Gleason, in this brief introduction to the God of the Old Testament, has produced an analytic compendium of what modern scholarship has to say about the many facets of Yahweh known to Israel. God is one, he is holy, creator of all things, loving, the lord of history. These are but five of the attributes and names discussed.

Nevertheless, a compendium carries its own problems, and this book poses one for this reviewer: to what type of reader does it best recommend itself? Non-professionals will perhaps find too much historical and cultural background presupposed for their fruitful use. Persons more seriously engaged in contemporary Scripture study will be disappointed at a lack of any fresh insights. The need for selectivity by readers of either group in the face of today's abundance of biblical studies may warrant by-passing this book whose theme, attractive jacket, and authorship otherwise hold out promise.

Sister Mary Dennis, O.S.B.
Mount Saint Scholastica
Atchison, Kansas

SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION: Baptism and Confirmation. By Charles Davis. Sheed and Ward, New York, 1964. Pp. 159. Cloth, $3.50.

Father Davis has an unusual gift for putting into eminently understandable English the best of contemporary theological study. Readers familiar with his *Liturgy and Doctrine* and *Theology for Today*

will expect clear and cogent presentation of ideas on the *Sacraments of Initiation;* they will not be disappointed. As indicated by the subtitle, he treats first of Baptism and then of Confirmation. For each of these two main topics he gives first an historical appreciation of the rites through the Old and New Testaments and in the life of the Church, and then proceeds to unfold their theological riches.

Baptism is seen in its full biblical context ("washing" alone is an impoverished view and an inadequate account of its symbolism), and it is developed as the sacrament of faith par excellence. The very form of Baptism, it seems, was not a "formula" pronounced by the minister alone but "was a profession of faith by the candidate in answer to an interrogation by the minister" (p. 48). To be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus meant to profess faith in Jesus *as Kyrios* (and thereby in the Trinity). He shows that the Church has continually adapted her rites to the changing historical situation, and we should be neither surprised nor disturbed "to find that the very different conditions of our times are causing the Church to overhaul her ritual once more" (p. 70). The excellent third chapter points out that sacraments are not "things" but are symbolic actions of Christ in his Church. Here there is an encounter with the living Christ, and it is his death and resurrection which he shares with us in Baptism.

Confirmation is seen in its unity with baptism, both leading to the Eucharist, in the fullness of Christian initiation. The historical glance at Confirmation again shows many variations and forms. A final chapter, "Witnesses of Christ," emphasizes the work of Confirmation in relation to Baptism. Confirmation completes Baptism, makes us complete Christians, but this does not mean the same as "perfect Christians," not "advanced in the spiritual life." The indwelling Spirit will perfect us as we witness publicly, as we proclaim in our lives the Christ in whom we have professed faith, and as we join in the Eucharistic banquet of life.

This volume deserves careful study by all who profess Christ, especially by those who witness to Christ in the classroom. It is in the mainstream of contemporary thought and is a valuable (and clear!) contribution to sacramental theology.

Myron Kasprick, O.S.B.
Saint John's Abbey
Collegeville, Minnesota

JESUS, JOY OF THE SUFFERING. By Rev. Lawrence G. Lovasik, S.V.D. Daughters of St. Paul, Boston, 1964. Paper, $1.50. Cloth, $2.50.

Suffering, for most of us, brings with it the temptation to indulge in self-pity, and for some, the far more serious temptation to doubt the goodness of God. In addition, it frequently finds us in the unhappy condition of experiencing the need for God, but feeling unable to pray. Father Lovasik's book, *Jesus, Joy of the Suffering,* is meant to be a source of light and strength in just such circumstances. Written in the second person, it places in the mind and heart of the sufferer prayers which express humble resig-

nation, childlike confidence, earnest petition for help to make of suffering a fruitful experience. It is, therefore, a kind of prayer book for the sick and afflicted, and could well serve a real need at the bedside of a patient who is prepared to accept its message.

A book of this type is of value when it leads the soul to formulate its own prayer; it is a hindrance when it becomes a substitute for personal effort or creates the delusion that suffering is supernaturally fruitful only to the degree that we are able to express lofty sentiments in prayer.

Sister Jean Marie, S.S.N.D.
Notre Dame of the Lake
Mequon, Wisconsin

THE SECRET WAYS OF PRAYER. By R. L. Bruckberger, O.P. Dimension Books, Wilkes-Barre, Pa. 1964. Pp. vii, 95. Cloth, $2.95.

A question dogs the heels of the reader: Why did the author write this book? It seems that this material on prayer has all been produced before in one book or another; but it is a little ironic to discover that, in this case, it is literally true. *The Secret Ways of Prayer* is merely a better translation of Chapter Two, "Returning to God," in *Toward the Summit*, published in 1956. Since there is no information in this second translation to indicate that the material had been published previously in English, this reviewer feels that there was a communication gap somewhere and that neither author, translator nor publisher was aware of a reduplication.

One wishes that the book jacket's claim had been a little more modest: *Secrets* is not "an intense meditation on the inner theological and scriptural meanings of prayer"; eight years have produced many valuable liturgical and scriptural insights into prayer which are regrettably absent. It is rather much a potpourri ranging from scholastic distinctions, "...a unity that is peculiarly spiritual, greater than the union of soul and body, i.e. absolute identity in the intentional order" (p. 55) to poetic flights, "[human creatures] ...enclosed in a mysterious gestation that kneeds us like dough, repairs us and restores us from top to bottom, infuses us with a mystic blood..." (p. 51). Briefly, it is simply a nice devotional little book.

Sister Margaret Cortona, O.P.
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THE STORIES OF POPE JOHN XXIII. By Louis Michaels. Templegate Publishers, Springfield, Illinois, 1964. Pp. 125. Paperback, $1.00.

Although the impact of Pope John XXIII on the world is not fully assessed, the imprint of his spirituality is being felt all over the world. Compiled in this book are 150 anecdotes, legends, and quotations related to the life of the man who became John XXIII. Embracing a gamut of variety, these stories show a man full of good sense and humor; they display a heart full of tenderness for all. Here is one of the anecdotes:

One day a carpenter was called to put up a new bookcase in the

Paris nunciature. When he accidentally hammered his thumb instead of a nail his awareness of the fact was broadcast in blasphemous terms. He invoked the witness of God and a procession of saints. Roncalli rose from his desk, walked into the next room where the carpenter was still licking his bruised thumb. "Alors, qu' est-ca que c'est ca? Vous ne pouvez pas dire'merde' comme tout le monde?" the nuncio asked.

No less than 153 appropriate but unusual black and white pen sketches enliven the script. The spring-green cover is enhanced with a caricature of John XXIII accentuating his corpulency.

Sister Mary Xavier, O.S.U.
Shawe Memorial High School
Madison, Indiana

THE MARIAN FORUM, Vol. 4. THE CHANGING CHURCH. Edited by Alfred Isacsson, O. Carm. The Scapular Press, New York, 1964. Pp. 76. Paper, $2.00.

The seven titles of the papers contained in this set of proceedings bespeak a promise of great things for the busy religious in search of insights into the present renewal of the Church: "The Religious Life in a Changing Church" (Anselm Burke); "The Ecclesial Nature of Personal Piety" (Thaddeus Doyle); "The Significance of the Bible in the Life of the Church" (Roland Murphy); "The New Theology and the Prayer-Life of the Religious" (Joachim Snyder); "Our Lady's Abiding Place in the Church" (Eamon Carroll); "The Orthodox Churches and Our Lady" (Pius Gagnon); "Protestantism and the Blessed Virgin Mary" (Lawrence Mooney). All the authors are members of the Order of Carmelites. Unfortunately, with the exception of Father Murphy's clear and practical comments on the Bible, the promise is unfulfilled. In all probability the reason is to be found in the time limits imposed originally on the speakers. Generally the contents are informative and acceptable; what is lacking is depth of treatment. Given the ambitious subjects, this deficiency is crucial. There is not enough said to make it easy to recommend the booklet warmly.

More distressing are the positive affronts contained in the last two pieces, presumably included with an ecumenical aim. In the first the "proof-text" approach to Genesis and the Gospel of Luke are astounding in a book dated 1964 (pp. 58-59). The same author has allowed himself unhappy over-simplifications in relation to our Orthodox and Protestant brothers (pp. 58, 62). This lack of sympathy, to use a tepid term, is even more pronounced in the last paper in which a man of the intellectual stature of Karl Barth is accused of an "irrationality" born of "hysteria," and the work to which the Vatican Council has called us all in its decree on ecumenism is reduced to "a cold war" (p. 67). There is no less strong word to describe the caricature of the Protestant theological position given here than bigotry (pp. 66-67).

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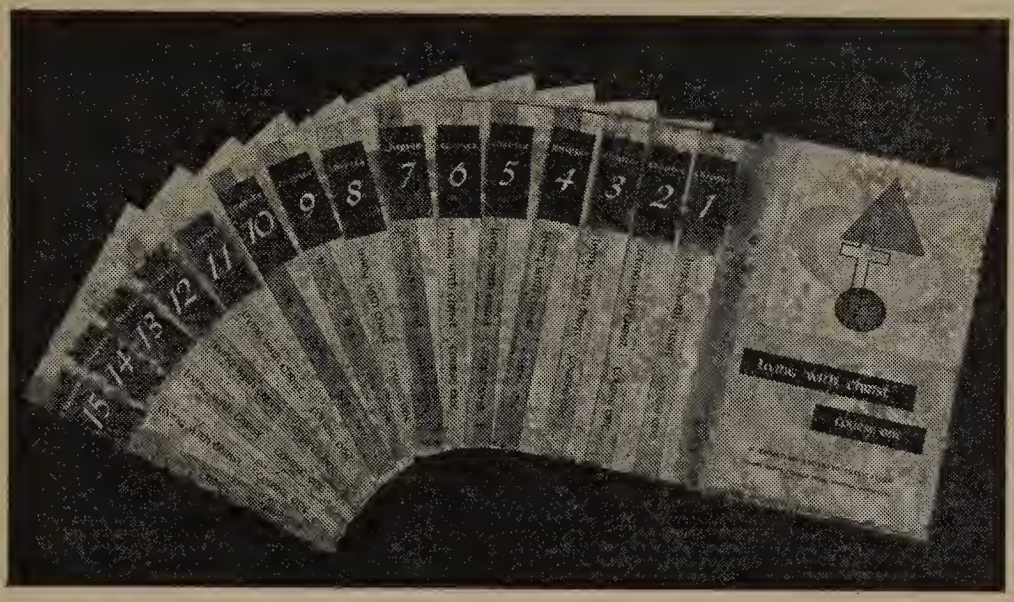

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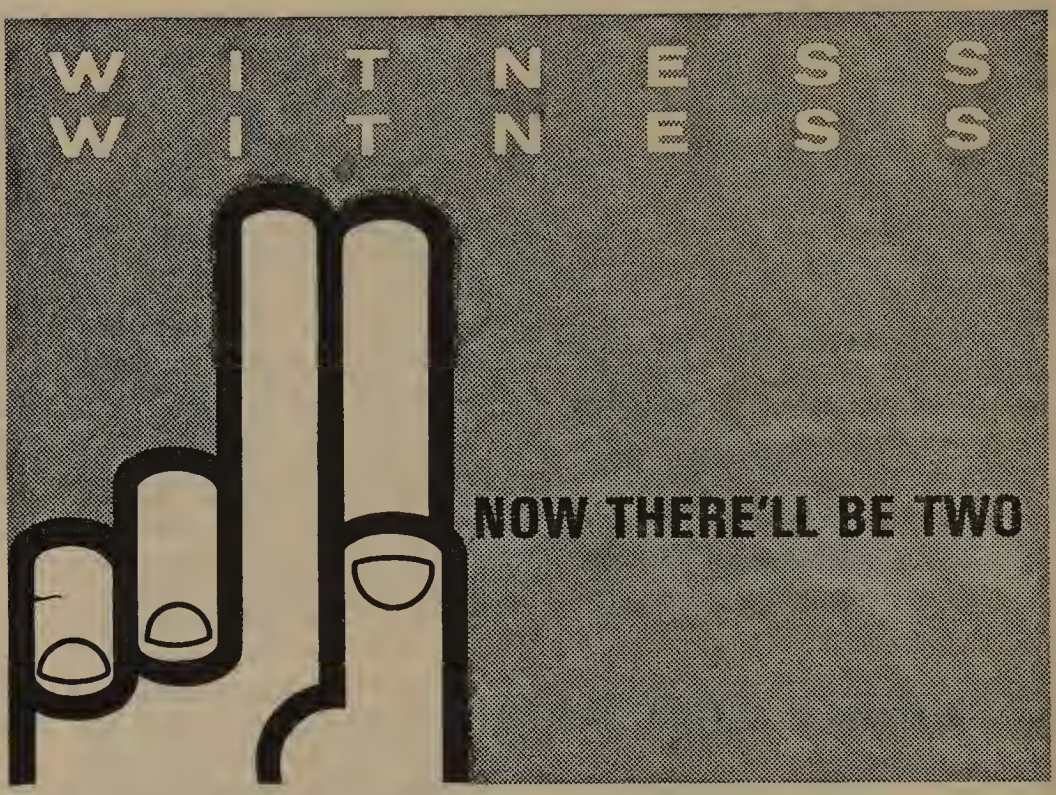

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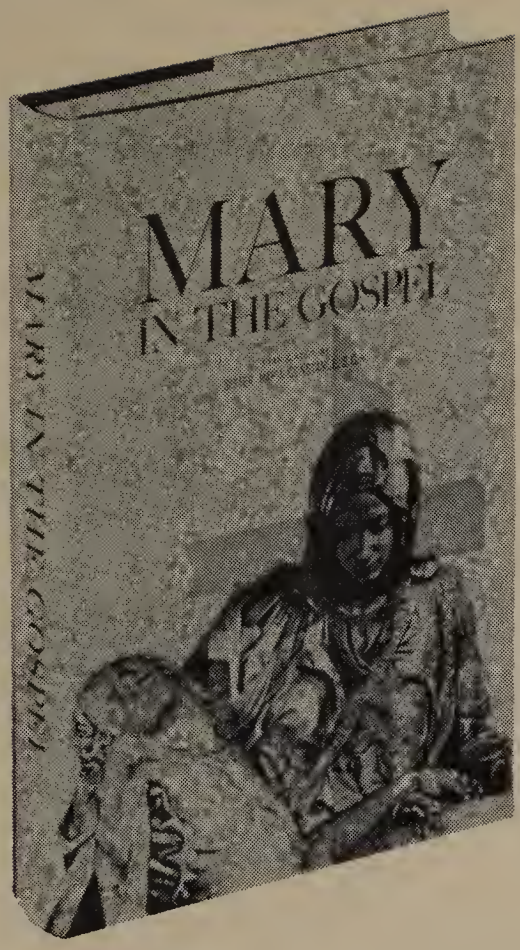

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